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Plain English.

A
SERMON

At St. Mary-le-Bow,

For Reformation of Manners.

ADVERTISEMENT.

W *Hereas the Reverend Incumbent of St. Mary-le-Bow, (whom I honour for his Worth) has desir'd an Advertisement to be Publish'd; [This Sermon was Preach'd to the Great Offence of the Minister of the Parish, and some of the Hearers, and is now Publish'd contrary to their Judgment, and Friendly Admonition]: I also desire the said Incumbent to prove any Falshood either in Doctrine or Fact, and I shall readily retract it.*



April 1.

W B.

Plain English.

A
S E R M O N

Preached at

St. *Mary-le-Bow*,

On Monday, March 27. 1704.

F O R
Reformation of Manners

With Some Enlargements.

By WILLIAM BISSET, *One of the
Ministers of St. Catherine's by the Tower.*

The Sixth Edition.

L O N D O N :

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PREFACE.

Little did I think this day Fortnight, ever to have crept out of my quiet beloved Obscurity, to appear in Print, (having especially no Dignity, not so much as M. A. to Adorn a Title-Page,) much less to become the Town-talk; of which (as a great Unhappiness) I ever had both a dread and abhorrence: But I hop'd to have stole a passage through the World, (as I have hitherto done,) to use the Words of our Admirable Mr. Norris, (whom I love to think and speak after,)

Like Subterraneous Streams, unheard, unknown.

But Providence has now call'd me (and I must not repine), to such a Service as has broke all those Measures, and made me be taken up in the lips of talkers (and as some would have it, though I hope most unjustly) an Infamy of the People, Ezek. 36. 3. I quickly foresaw that this Undertaking would cost me dear; that it would reduce me to this uncomfortable Dilemma, this hard Choice, Either to be Unfaithful to God, or Distastful to Man; and what should I do? Decline it I could not, and Prevaricate in it I durst not; lest as God threatens Jeremiah 1. 17. I confound thee before them. For how could I sincerely promote the great Work of Reformation then before me; and point out and remove (which was my profest Design) the Obstacles that lye in the way, and yet balk the Three last Objections, (under which all the harsh Grating part comes in) when I knew in my Conscience, (and all the World knows) that those are by far the greatest Remora's to our Progress, and have done us more Mischief than all the rest together? Though at the same time, they could not be touch'd upon without giving (as I knew they would, and find they have,) great Offence: But if I yet pleased Men, I should not be the Servant of Christ. 'Tis plain I could have no Motive but Duty to God, and Discharge of my Conscience, to put me upon that which must needs procure me many and powerful Enemies, and involve me in numberless Troubles; but the best isn't is, I

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have

have nothing in this World worth either Losing or Keeping; and my Life in the Cause of God and Truth, I reckon better Lost than Kept.

It has been a long while to me Matter of Deep Concern, and Unfeigned Sorrow, to observe the Sacred Name of the Church so vilely abus'd by designing or debauched Men: By the first, to kindle and foment Divisions and Jealousies between Protestants of the same Faith and Country, at this Critical Juncture; when there is the most evident Necessity of the strictest Union against an Enemy, whose known Maxim is, Divide & Impera, and whose main hope of Success is to weaken us by home-bred Feuds, and so reduce us. On the other hand, by debauched Men to oppose all Attempts for Reformation of Manners, to render all Godliness, and Conscientious Walking, odious and contemptible under the Name of Phanaticism, and to skreen their Vices and Malignity with the Veil of the Sanctuary, and give too much occasion for that unhappy Proverb, The nearer the Church, the further from God. Now I durst not slip so fair an Occasion as Providence had laid in my way, to detect their pernicious Practices, and set Things in a true Light.

The only Cause of Disquiet I have, is that vain and groundless Suggestion, (which yet passes with many) (so natural is that fear of Man which bringeth a Snare) that this may prove prejudicial to the Worthy Persons engaged in the Societies: Tho' how that should be, I cannot imagine, after the Publick Declaration I made, that they were (except a very few) Strangers to my Person, and all to my Design; (which indeed no Mortal was privy to, nor ever saw or heard one Syllable before-hand of what I then delivered.) Now this Jealousy must suppose the Height of Tyranny and Unjustice in Persons of Power and Authority, (beyond what I ever heard of in France) to visit the Faults of the Preacher upon the innocent Hearers, and refuse to do their Office, or do it less faithfully, because have offended them.

However, to clear them from all manner of Suspicion (lest the Guilt of Truth should lye at their doors) I'll do them this further Justice, to let the World know all that
past

past before or since. On Saturday very late, the 18th Instant, Three Gentlemen (of whom I knew Two by Sight, the Third was a Perfect Stranger) came to my House, and desired me to Preach the Reformation-Sermon on the 27th. I suspected then (what they have since told me,) That they had Fail'd elsewhere; (it seems) one whom they depended on was gone out of Town; and they try'd others in vain, at last (I wonder how it came into their heads) they pitch'd on me. I objected the shortness of the warning, (having much daily interruption upon the account of my Charge, it being my Turn here for 'Attending.) But chiefly, what I thought would have brought me off; that I am not only Obscure, and so unfit for such a Work (which had been honour'd by the Highest of our Function,) but also Obnoxious, and not well-Thought of, by some in great Authority, whom it was their Interest to Oblige. With all This I desired them to Acquaint their Principals, and try to get a fitter Person; if not, to let me have Notice on Monday; and when I had consider'd on it, and desired direction of the Only Wise God, rather than they should be without a Sermon, I would undertake it. I did accordingly (upon their repeated Desire, Monday the 20th;) and it seems, have pull'd an old House upon my Head. Those who employ'd me have been by far my severest Censurers: They have ever since worri'd me without Mercy, loaded me with Reproaches, tir'd me out with Cavils and Contradictions, and not given me one quiet day. I suppose what they have since said and done, could not be in the name of all the Societies, for I can hardly think, such a Body of Men could be (One and All) so Rude and Unreasonable. 'Tis like, their Sentiments (as well as others) may vary about me; and some say, He is a Good Man, others, Nay; but I've heard none say, He Deceiveth the People; for what I have said is notoriously True; and as to Fact, I am ready to make Oath of every Syllable.

But Truth ('tis said) is not to be spoken at all times. But, I think this is the Time (if ever) to undeceive the World; when we seem almost upon the Brink of Ruin, and nothing (under God) but the timely Opening of People's Eyes can prevent it: And the Pulpit sure is the most proper Place;
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(when God is concern'd, as he is in all this.) I have done when I have answered these few Objections ; which are all I can yet hear of.

Obj. 1. You have us'd a strange Freedom ; and even extreme Boldness.

Ans. I confess the Charge, and justify my self from that Prayer of the Apostles, (whose Pattern sure we may safely follow) Acts 4. 29. Grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word ; and in divers other Places of the Acts to the same effect.

Obj. 2. You have made several harsh Reflections upon —

Ans. I charge none but the Guilty ; those that are Innocent are no-wise concern'd. But if any conceive themselves injur'd ; I reply with the Town-Clerk, Acts 19. 38. The Law is open, and there are Deputies, let them implead ; or take what other Method of Redress they please.

Obj. 3. Some say you are mad ; and it seems they have the Authority of a Great Person for it ; and sure no man in his Senses would venture to speak the Truth so plainly at this time of day. I answer (and if they won't believe me, they may chuse) in the words of St. Paul, Acts 26. 25. I am not mad, — but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

Obj. 4. You are not serious enough. I have answer'd this in the Sermon, I shall only add, Ridentem dicere verum quid vetat ? A Man may be merry and yet in good earnest ; and all who have been my Hearers these Twelve Years will bear me Witness, that I never affected to seem odd and singular, nor to imitate them, Qui captant Hominum risum Famamq; dicacis. Hor.

Qu. 5. Is it faithfully publish'd ? Ans. It is according to my Notes, with utmost exactness : there is a good deal added that was prepar'd, and I had not time to deliver : but nothing left out, except two or three short Passages, which never were in my Notes : and nothing material alter'd, but two or three Words at the Printer's desire.

Any one that pleases may come to me, and peruse my Notes for fuller Satisfaction. I conclude the Preamble with this hearty Prayer, That this small Treatise may, by the Blessing of God, prove effectual. Acts 26. 18. To open Men's Eyes, and to turn them from Darknefs to Light, &c.

Plain English.

P S A L M 94. 15.

But Judgment shall return unto Righteousness, and all the upright in Heart shall follow it.

I Should think my self a very ill Husband of my time (one Minute whereof I grudge to be diverted from the main Business of the Day) should I employ it in calling a Consult, much more in raising the whole Posse of Criticks, Scholiasts, various Readings and Versions, that *Cloud of VVitneses* which often serve to darken the Text; tho' to make the Citers Learning and Reputation clear, and start a Mystery, or rather raise a Mist where there was none before: At best they are like Winter Nights, bright perhaps and wholsom, but very Cold. Whereas we have warmer Work now before us, and I am very leath it should Cool in my Hands.

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I shall therefore content my self with this plain, easie and obvious Sense (which is generally the best) and call in no other help but some paralel Texts, (one Text of Scripture, being the best Key to open the meaning of another.)

But Judgment shall return unto Righteousness. i. e. Justice shall begin once more to run in the right Channel; the former Obstructions being happily remov'd; and as 'tis exprest Am. 5. 24. Judgment run down as Waters, and Righteousness as a mighty stream. And so like Tigris and Euphrates form one strong and beautiful Current (" or place " of broad Rivers and Streams) bear down all Dams, and force its way through all resistance; to the same effect is that expression, Mat. 12. 20. Till he send forth Judgment unto Victory, i. e. to Triumph over Fraud, Lewdness, Injustice and Oppression.

For it is not (we know) always thus: Solomon had seen, and so have I too; And I wish it be not so now, Eccles. 3. 16. *The place of Judgment, that Wickedness was there, and the place of Righteousness, that Iniquity was there.* "That is, the very Foundations of the Earth out of course, but now " they should be establisht again upon their right " Basis. I conceive the same thing to be intended, Psal. 60. 4. *Thou hast given a Banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the Truth. i. e. God displays, as it were, his Royal Standard, and beats up for Volunteers; as in the Verse after my Text, Who will rise up for me against the Evil-doers? &c.* And because a taste of Authority may perhaps be expected, Mr. Wesley in his Reformation Sermon upon this last Text, gives much

I have Engaged.

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much the same Explication; to whom as also for the Context I refer you.

Well now, upon such a blessed turn of Affairs, what Ensues? *All the upright in Heart shall follow it. i. e.* Every Sincere, Honest, Well-meaning Christian, that has the true Love and fear of God, (whose Heart God has *touched*, as 'tis said of the Band that followed *Saul*, 1 Sam. 10. 26.) shall observe and strike in with this favourable juncture of Providence (*For a Wise Mans Heart*, Eccles. 8. 5. *discerneth both Time and Judgment*); shall Lift himself under the great Captain of our Salvation, and lend an helping hand to set forward Reformation.

All the upright in Heart shall follow it. Not at a wary distance, as St. Peter followed Christ, Mat. 26. 58. *afar off, unto the High-Priests Palace*; and out of an Itch of Curiosity, *to see the end*: Much less as *Judas* followed, or rather dog'd him into the Garden to betray him. Not as *Neuters* hover about the Field of Battle, to see which side will prevail, and then to strike in with the Conquerors: or as the *French* while the *English* and *Dutch* Fleets were engag'd, to dash one against the other, and make a Prey of both; (and there are some amongst us that would play the same Game over again.) Nor as *Suttlers* follow the Camp to make a penny; or as many of our Young Gallants, to get a Name and somewhat to talk of. But to follow it close and in good earnest, as a Lawyer would follow a Fat Cause, or a Broker a gainful Bargain, or an Hungry Courtier a good yielding Place, or some others their *Comfortable Importance*; so to follow as to over-take, whatever it cost us; like *Gideon's Men*, Judg. 8. 4. *Faint, yet pursuing.*

To press at the same rate as St. Paul did toward the Prize of his High Calling. *I so run, not as uncertainly, so Fight I, not as one that beateth the Air, this one thing I do, I follow after to apprehend, that for which also I am apprehended of Christ.* 'Tis for want of such an Hearty Resolution that we fail if at all: *Therefore is Judgment far from us, Isa. 59.9. neither doth Justice overtake us.*

This I conceive to be the Sense of our Text: However, if it should not be the right, I am sure 'tis a good one, and such as the whole Tribe of Criticks cannot justly except against. Admitting this to be the *Psalmists* meaning, "I shall further observe (what every one knows) that the Book of *Psalms* consists of Praises, Prayers, or Prophecies, but our Text is neither of the former, ergo the latter, and I think I may subjoyn in our Saviours words, (at least in a qualified Sense) *Luke 4 21. This Day is this Scripture fulfilled in your Ears.* For if some sharp-sighted Persons (as my Lord Bacon for one) could in that Prophecy of *Daniel 12. 4. Many shall run too and fro, and Knowledge shall be increased*, read the discovery of both the *Indies*, the Use of the Compass, and other great improvements of Art and Knowledge in the Natural World: I think we may as clearly and with less straining of the words read in our Text, the more valuable improvements this Last Age has been blest with, (as an Antidote against its abounding Rampant Iniquity) in the Moral World.

Amongst which your Societies (for 'tis pity to part them, they do so sweetly combine) most deservedly lead the Van, as being the best *Virtuosos*, the True Royal Society, and to whom the World is incompa-

incomparably more oblig'd. And as far as my Acquaintance with History reaches, I dare make that Challenge to all *Gainsayers*, Job 8. 8. *Inquire I pray thee, of the former Ages, and prepare thy self to the search of their Fathers,* and let them find me your fellows, in all respects, if they can; and I hope that Prophetick Blessing belongs to you, *ver. before, Tho' your beginning was small, yet your latter end shall greatly increase. And though you are but of Yesterday,* *ver. 9.* you may be well laid in the Ballance against all that numerous Fry and Rabble of Fraternities, which *Rome* that Fruitful Mother of Fornications has spawn'd these Thousand Years: Not excepting her last and darling Brood (and I hope 'twill prove her last, that she's past Bearing, and God has given her a *Miscarrying Womb and dry Breasts*) those who impudently call themselves the Society of *Jesus*; as who should say, *Truly our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus.* But we may boldly appeal to himself, if they do not foully bely him, in those words after our Text, *ver. 20. Shall the Throne of Iniquity have Fellowship with Thee which frameth Mischief by a Law?* 'Twould be a greater Miracle then all that are ascrib'd to *Xavier Acofta*, and the whole Order of them to reconcile those *Leopards, Tygers and Asps* with the Lamb of God, "the Meek and Lowly *Jesus*. And if they are like him in any thing, 'tis in that one Instance, but in a far different Sense, *Luke 12. 49. I am come to send Fire on the Earth,* and what care they if it be already kindled? If all Christendom be in a flame, so the Tares of the Northern Heresie be burnt up, and the Incendiaries can make their Fortunes in the General Combustion.

But ye have not so Learned Christ : your Principles and Practices are as opposite to theirs as Light to Darknes ; nay, as *Christ* to *Belial* : your Design so Generous and Disinterested, so manifestly Calculated for the Publick Good, at your own great Expence, both of Labour and Treasure, and even hazard of your Lives ; that Malice it self knows not where to fasten, and is almost forc't to fall down before you, and confess that *God is in you of a Truth*. But to clear my self of the Charge of Flattery, I appeal to the Account the Reverend Dr. Kennet, and your fast Friend Dr. Woodward have given of your Successes at Home, and Honourable Testimonies from Abroad ; in which they have done you, and *but* done you Justice ; and lest any suspect me of a design upon you, I suppose 'tis well known you are no Corporation (and I am afraid never will be) and have no Livings or Dignities in your Disposal, nor do you ever give (that I hear of) any Salary, or so much as a Scarfe to your Chaplains. But perhaps I may take that Freedom with you “ in the sequel of this Discourse, as shall leave no suspicion of Flattery or Self-ends. In which I shall observe this easie and unaffected Method.

First, To prove this Great, and Unquestionable Obligation, *When Judgment returns to Righteousness, for all the upright in Heart to follow it.*

Secondly, To lay down some necessary Rules and Cautions whereby ye may *strive Lawfully*, and obtain the *Masteries*.

Thirdly, What will be the main Business and Burthen of the Day ; to answer Objections (which none yet have done so fully as might be wish't) and

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under this Head our main Arguments will Naturally fall in, and appear in their best Light and Strength, when the Objections are set as a foil against them.

Lastly, If my Time, and your Patience, be not quite spent, I shall close up all with a brief Exhortation.

For 'tis fair to let you know before-hand that I shall considerably exceed the usual Time: For I may say with *Elihu, Job 32. 18. I am full of Matter, the Spirit within me constraineth me; I will speak that I may be refreshed.* I have a great deal to say to you, and I shall scarce ever have such another Opportunity to meet you all together again. The Case is extraordinary, and so perhaps is the Message wherewith I am charg'd. We seem upon our last Legs, and Measures must be concerted to retrieve our Losses, or we must think of laying down our Arms: And perhaps I may have somewhat considerable to offer, (which cannot be done in an hurry); and if you can have the Patience to hear me out, (for the main of my Message I shall reserve to the last) you may see reason to confess that your Time was not mispent: But this I promise, by God's assistance, to say as much in as few words as is possible; for Sense will lye close, and I hate to multiply words without cause, especially before such Auditors, knowing that *the Kingdom of God is not in Word but in Power.*

But I hope there is little need of such Apologies to you *Gentlemen of the Reformation* (for with you properly my Business is); for besides that, these Sermons have by consent a Dispensation from the usual narrow restraints, they have I know

among our *Dissenting Brethren* ; and I am not ashamed to call them *Brethren*, and I hope you are not ; two Hours being allow'd by them, and 'tis but enough, for so weighty a Task) ; and I know no Canon but Custom (which may be dispens'd with upon special Occasions) against a long Sermon even in the Church. Besides, I suppose you have a larger stock of Patience than common Hearers (and I wish 'twere the greatest trial of your Patience you are like to meet with, by putting your Hand to God's Plough, to suffer the Word of Exhortation somewhat longer than ordinary). " Though even that's a sore Penance with
 " most, and many of those you are to deal with
 " had as lieu you should keep them as long in the
 " Stocks ; and perhaps it would be a proper and
 " effectual Punishment in some cases to make
 " them suffer a Sermon, as a Work-house, some
 " think, would awe Rogues more effectually than
 " the Gallows. But your Spirits, I periwade myself, are not wound up just to three quarters : Where by the way I cannot but resent the unfair treaty of partition between *Christ* and *Belial* ; three Hours are too short to hear the *Devils Buffoons*, (five Hours I have known my self in the Days of my Vanity) whereas three quarters of an Hour are thought too long an *Audience* for the *Ambassadors of Christ*.

But I am perswaded better things of you ; nay, I know the proof of you, (having try'd your Patience this way more than once) that you are no Starters, nor so conformable to the Mode of the Times, as to shew your Watches every other Minute, and cry, O ! what a weariness is it ! When will

will this long-winded Parson have done ! If you were of this Spirit you'd have made but a sorry Court of Assistants at *Ezra's* Reformation, when they stay'd from Morning to Noon (six long Hours) in the open Air about this Work, and were withal wet to the Skin ; for we find them *Ezra* 10. 9. *trembling because of this matter, and for the great Rain.*

But as for the rest, who either drop'd in by Chance, or came out of Custom or Curiosity, or to spy out our Liberty that we have in the Lord, or it may be they know not why themselves : they have the same freedom here as in the Devil's Chappel, to stay as few or as many Acts as they please ; and when they have heard as much as serves their turn, or something they do not like, or think it may be Change or Dinner-time, they are free to be gone ; and as they came unsent and unlook'd for, so they may depart not desir'd ; and the only Remark I shall make is that 1 *John* 2. 19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us ; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us, &c.*

Having thus settled the Preliminaries to make all Parties easie, (who may stay as long or as short a time as they please) I shall now proceed to the first Head, which will not require much to be said of it, because it is of the number of those Propositions, which by manifestation of the Truth commend themselves to every ones Conscience in the sight of God ; and I never affect to demonstrate Day-light, especially when so many, by divers strong and invincible Proofs, have done it already.

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The little I shall say may be reduc'd under those two common places, Duty and Interest ; for I never choose to go out of the beaten Road, unless it be for better way, or to save ground.

1. Then, 'Tis the Duty of every sincere Christian to lend an helping hand in setting forward the Work of Reformation. *Curse ye Meroz*, Judg. 5. 23. has been so often look'd on as a Trumpet of Sedition, that I dare not sound it, though for the help of the Lord not against the *Mighty* (for then it might look Seditiously) but against the *Beasts of the People*. I shall rather observe how unkindly God took it at the *Tekaites* hands, and has recorded it to their lasting Reproach, *Neh. 3. 5. That their Nobles put not their necks to the work of the Lord*. Few consider what a Crime it is to be cold and unconcern'd in their Maker's Quarrel, and how highly the jealous God will resent it. If *Plato* would allow none to stand Neuters in his Common-wealth, and when the Houses divide all must file off to the Yea's or No's ; (Ay, but they may step out, you'll say, and sink a Vote ; so may you too, if you can altogether go out of the World ;) no wonder if he who has told us, *we are not our own*, has also declar'd, *he that is not with me is against me*, and wishes we were either *hot or cold*. He cannot wave his right in us, nor consent to be rob'd. *Mal. 1. 6. A Son honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Master ; if then I be a Father, where is mine honour ? &c.* What an undutiful, nay unnatural, Son must that be, who can patiently see his Father outrag'd and insulted, when Natural Affection overcame Nature it self, and dumb *Atys* could find a Tongue in his Father's Defence ?

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Nay, there is not barely Duty, but Necessity
 “ in the Case. All the upright in Heart *shall* follow it. The Love of Christ constrains them ;
and Love is strong as Death, the Coals thereof are as Coals of Fire, which hath a most vehement Flame.
Cant. 8. 6. To talk of an upright Heart, and not true to and zealous for God, is a Lye all over. If our Hearts be *sound in his Statutes*, we cannot see them violated and trampled under Foot, without expressing the utmost Resentment ; when Rivers of Tears ran down the Royal Prophet's Eyes, because Men kept not God's Laws. But if he were then a King, God might have said to him as he did to Joshua in a like Case, *Josh. 7. 10.* *Get thee up : Wherefore liest thou thus upon thy Face ? Israel hath sinned and transgressed my Covenant, &c.*

*Indeed our loud-Tongu'd Sins demand Supplies,
 More from Briareus Hands than Argus Eyes.*

Mourn with Jeremy in secret places for their Pride and other Spiritual Sins, but make them suffer in publick places for their open Lewdness and Profaneness. Wherefore else serveth the Law ? Was it not added because of Transgressions ?

But 2. Duty is but a feeble Argument with most ; Interest is the Nail that will drive, and if you can once make Men sensible of that, you have gain'd your Point. As to their Eternal Interest 'tis the Object of Faith, *and all Men have not Faith* ; nay, few in such a degree as to conceive aright of the amazing Powers of the World to come. Tell the Men of this World of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light ; they are of the
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Cardinal's Mind, *that had rather lose his part in Paradise, than his part in Paris. Glorious things are spoken of thee thou City of God.* Ay, 'tis a fine place, they'll say, when you are there; but they had rather see something on this side the Grave. I will not therefore to such use that Motive, *Isa. 33. 17. Thine Eyes shall see the King in his Beauty: They shall behold the Land that is very far off; but rather try what that other will do, ver. 20. Look upon Zion the City of our Solemnities: Thine Eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet Habitation, &c.* Is it no Happiness to engage the most High to be our Defence? To have Peace within our Walls, and Plenteousness within our Palaces? Read but the 144th Psalm, and then I doubt not, you will heartily join in the Chorus, *ver. ult. Happy is that People that is in such a case, &c.* But what's all this, will the narrow self-ended Worldling say to me? Let the World go how 'twill I shall fare as the rest. Prove that 'tis mine Interest, mine in particular, or you say just nothing. Is it your Interest to have Highway-men, House-breakers, Shop-lifters suppress'd? That 'tis without doubt; for else there would be no living one by another, and no Man could call any thing his own. But what is't to me if others whore, and drink, and swear, and play the Devil? The worst is their own, I shan't be accountable for them. *Cains and Gallios* answer right, *Acts 18. 15. If it be a question of words, and names, and of your Law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters:* Yet he had the Grace (which I wish some of our Magistrates had) to think that not only *Wrong* but *wicked Lewdness* too belong'd to his cognizance.

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Well then I'll shew you how 'tis *your* Interest. Could you be content to have your own Wives and Daughters debauch'd, it may be ("after the *French* fashion) forc'd before your Eyes? Would you have your Sons lewd by Sixteen? and bring Pox and Rottenness into your Houses? No sure. When it comes so near Home, you'll be sensible of the Danger. But if Lust have the Reins, and may range without controul, it will not be confin'd to the common Cattle, but attempt the Chastity of Maids and Matrons; and no Vertue almost will be safe. If things had gone on as they were once a going, Chastity, "perhaps by this "time, had been a Scandal, and modest Women for Signs and Wonders, and Whores, Pimps and Stallions, had carried the World before them: And I may say with strictest Truth, *Isa. 1. 9. Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant; but I hope now he will multiply them that they shall not be few, and glorifie them also and they shall not be small, Jer. 30. 19. we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.*

But what have we to do, they'll say, with other Mens Drinking? Why besides that, if Drunkenness get the Sway, they will put the *Bottle to your Nose*, and force you to be as very Beasts as themselves; (to that pass were things come within the Memory of Man) are you content to be outrag'd in the Streets, and assaulted by every furious Beast; as I was my self, but this day Se'n-night, siez'd by a Sot even before it was dark, and had much ado to make him ungrapple; (for give them but License and we shall have Noon-day Devils:)

Devils :) Though neither will you be safe in your own Houses, unless you can be content to have your Rest disturb'd, your Windows broken, it may be your Houses fir'd too by Midnight Scow-rers, and (what is very common) your Officers and Watchmen wounded and slain.

Once more ; What Harm will others Swearing do me ? Why should I *make a Man an Offender for a word*, when it does me no manner of Mis-chief ? I Answer ; If you have any Conscience, or Love to God, 'twill be *bitter as Death*, to have your Ears grated with that Language of Fiends ; to pass through such Volleys of Hell-shot. Besides that, it makes all Business and Conversation uneasie by an endless necessity of Checks, and Re-proof. But though you make no Conscience of any such matter ; have you a mind to be sworn out of your Rights, your Estates, nay your very Lives, by Knights of the Post ? And how do ye think they arrive at that Dignity ? but by passing the wonted Trials, performing their Exercise, and learning first to swear the Compass. Profane Swearing is the direct Road to Perjury ; and has made way for such Juries, and Evidence, as would take away the honestest Man's Life in the Kingdom, if the Court pleases but to send Direction. For when once the Reverence of an Oath is lost, 'tis not the place that will make it solemn, or strike a sufficient Awe upon the Soul ; (especially in that slight careless manner 'tis administered in our Courts) ; and therefore *Solomon* rightly opposeth *him that Swareth, to him that feareth an Oath, Eccl. 9. 2.*

Thus

Thus much of the first Head ; viz. the Obligation : I shall now lay down some Cautionary Rules, and be upon each as brief as I can.

1. Then, be sure you, that engage in this generous Design, be publick-Spirited ; free from all little Ends and Interests ; and addicted to no Party, or Faction whatsoever : but *Catholicks* in the truest Sense. The most Famous *Party-Man* is not fit for a pitchd Battle, or a general Assault ; as our Business is fitly describ'd, 2 Cor. 10. 4. *Pulling down of strong-holds, casting down Imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth it self against the knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every thought to the Obedience of Christ.* If you belong to a certain Set of Men, you'l go no further with us, then your way lies in common ; and when they part you'l give us the Go-by. Such Factionous Reformers are like the mixt Multitude that came out of *Egypt*, who soon fell a Lusting, and then a murmuring. Or like *Dauids* Band in the Wilderness, made up of a medley of Debtors, Male-Contents, Fugitives, and Malefactors ; who not only mutini'd about the Spoil ; but were ready to knock their own Leader o'th' Head. To all such Reformers, I may truly say, *ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of ;* at least ye are not of a Spirit fit for our turn. Let your name be Christians ; your Religion Charity, out of a pure Heart and good Conscience, and Faith unfeigned : And take in all that love the Lord Jesus in Sincerity. *One Lord, one Faith,* will make us all of *one Heart, one Mind, and one Mouth.* For my part, I dare no more confine the Church (as some would have us do) between *Dover* and *Berwick*, then between *Venice* and *Cadiz* ;
within

within one Protestant Country, then *St. Peter's* Patrimony; nor dare I limit Grace any more to this, or that Way, or Opinion among Christians, then to this or that Stature, or Complexion. Our Business is to promote the Glory of God, and the general Interest of the Gospel; not to seek our own, no nor the things of our Party; but those things which are *Jesus Christ's*: And *as many as walk by this Rule, Peace be on them, and Mercy as on the Israel of God.*

2. *Cease ye from Man whose Breath is in his Nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?* *Isa. 2. ult.* Fear not their Faces, Court not their Favour, hold not their Persons in Admiration; and especially be not ashamed of their Reproaches. Consider that Charge, *Isa. 51. 12. I, even I am he that comforteth you: Who art thou that thou shouldst be afraid of a Man that shall Dye, and of the Son of Man that shall be made as Grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the Heavens, &c.* Remember the Cause is Gods, and he will not be beholding to his Creature for his Dues. I am afraid this has been one great hindrance to your Progress; if it have not brought a blast upon your endeavours; that you have trusted too much to the Arm of Flesh. *Jer. 17. 5.* And expected great matters from publick Countenance, and Persons of Place, and Figure in the World. 'Tis well if you can have it; but God can do his Work without, and rather chooses so to do; *that no Flesh may glory in his sight.* What need you cringe and sue for that which you may boldly demand? If your Houses are broke, or but your Pockets pickt, you'll require what redress the Law will afford; if
you

you are rob'd upon the Road, you'll go to the next *Justice*, and oblige him to take your Oath of what you have lost : And when God is rob'd, wrong'd or outrag'd, must you beg of them to do their Office? Humbly wait their *Worships* Leisure ; and thank them, if they'll be so civil as not to be Perjur'd ? Be as humble for your selves as you please ; but be stout for God. Dare not to debase the Dignity of the most High ; for 'tis more than you can answer. I hope, Gentlemen, you are no *Millenaries* ; nor look for that *Golden Age* on Earth (at least not in your time) when *all our Officers shall be Peace*, (or even our *Justices of Peace*) and our *Exactors Righteousness* : If so, your Eyes will fail in looking for your vain help. Surely, *Psalm*. 62. 9. *Men of low degree are Vanity, and Men of high degree a Lye. Magistrates* will often be false to their Trust, their God, their Prince. But if they deny Justice, or delay or trifle ; appeal to their *Superiours*, and bring the perjur'd Knaves to account ; and though they too are corrupt, yet you may make *Satan* cast out *Satan* in spight of himself : At last you can bring it before the highest Court of Judicature, the *House of Lords* ; and I am verily perswaded they'll do you Right. You need not be beholding to *Mortals*, much less to *Malignants* : You spend upon your own Stock ; and I'm afraid there will never be a Fund assign'd you (though 'tis highly reasonable) out of the Publick Revenue : And I hope you look for no Places, or Preferments ; if you do, you may happen to be foully deceiv'd ; and like the Troops of *Tema*, *Job* 6. 20. *Be confounded because ye had hoped*. Let this be your *Motto*, *Psalm*. 7. 10. *Our defence*

defence is of God, which saveth the upright in Heart. This your Prayer, Psal. 60. 11. Give us help from trouble : for vain is the help of Man. Through God we shall do valiantly : for he it is that shall tread down our Enemies.

But 3. Though you must be stout, take great heed of being hot. Remember the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God : He will not be serv'd by sinful Passions ; and we are Men of like Passions with others, and need to watch, lest they get the mastery ; for if they do, the whole Work is mar'd. That's a true Remark of Mr.

Reformation
Sermon. Wesley's, 'Tis perhaps one of the hardest things in the World to be zealous and not passionate. Now Passion (if it prevail to a great degree) will make it a blind Zeal, though the Cause be never so good : for Reason and Passion cannot have free course together. 'Tis true of the Passionate as well as the Ignorant, John 11. 10. But if a Man walk in the night he stumbleth, because there is no Light in him : Nay, if it rise to the heighth of Fury, 'twill make you not only blind, but mad ; and God may truly say as Achish, 1 Sam. 21. 15. Have I need of mad Men? &c. For *Ira furor brevis est*, Wrath is a meer Fit of Phrenzy ; and one mad Man is not fit to manage another. Though Madness (as Solomon says) is in their Hearts, whom you would reform, they may stop your Mouths with that of Horace, *O major tandem parcas insane minori*, Pray greater Bedlam let the less alone. There is another guise force than Passion to stem this impetuous Torrent ; viz. the Spirit of Power and Might : And 'tis this God has pitch'd on, Isa. 59. 19. When the Enemy shall

shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.

4. Remember you have need of *Patience*. As *Christ hath suffer'd for us in the Flesh*, 1 Pet. 4. 1. *Suffer'd the contradiction of Sinners against himself; suffer'd all the furious Assaults of Men, and Devils: Arm your selves with the like mind, and endure hardness as good Soldiers of his.* Think not of *Disbanding*, or *lying long in Quarters of Refreshment*. *Peace* there can be none, nor *Truce* long together; for we *wrestle not with Flesh and Blood (only) but with Principalities and Powers*; but *Heaven* remember will pay for all. God has blest'd you with some, with considerable Success; and I may say as he, 2 Chron. 25. 19. *Lo! thou hast smitten the Edomites, and thine Heart lifteth thee up*; (but I trust your *Hearts* like *Jehosaphat's*, 2 Chron. 17. 6. *are lift up in the ways of the Lord*); you have made some thousands of scandalous Offenders publick Examples; you have suppress'd perhaps some hundreds of lewd Houses, and brought others into better order: So far is well: But still remember, there's Work enough cut out for you. There are two strong *Cittadels* that still hold out against you; I mean, those two famous *Academies* of Hell, those *Nurseries* of all Vice, those *incorrigible Brothels*, the two *Play-houses*; where *Satan's seat* is; where he keeps his *head-quarters*; whence he can at any time draw forth fresh Supplies, and form in a manner what Parties he pleases; and whence he sends out *Detachments* every Campaign, (or rather, to speak in the *Jesuit's Language*, those famous *Comedians*) he makes his *Missions* every Summer to the two *Universities*,

to train up our Youth in *their* Liberal Arts and Sciences. And they have, let me tell you Gentlemen, a good hearty Friend in one of them, and as hearty an Enemy of yours, who will readily lend them his Interest, and afford them not only Reception, but Countenance too. Now to think the Work of Reformation can go smoothly on while these are in being; is as vain as to suppose this City may continue in perfect Peace, though the *Tower* and the *Savoy* were Garrison'd with *French*. These are left as the *Canaanites in the Land*, Numb. 33. 55. *to be pricks in your Eyes*, (an Eye-fore they are, I am sure, to every pious Soul) *and thorns in your Sides*; and these, I am confident, *hate to be reform'd*.

I know not what the *Master of the Revels* may do, (for to him I find they are sent to be *tutor'd*) he may possibly teach them better Manners than all the *Divines*, *Juries* and *Judges*, that have taken them to Task; because he acts *as one having Authority*: And therefore pray, Gentlemen, if you can, get him into your *Society*, and he may do us *Knight-service*. Let us however pluck up a good Heart, and hope the best still; who knows (for *Miracles* are not quite ceas'd, witness the Souldier that was struck blind t'other day in the *Tower*;) but the *Players* may turn *Reformers* too; and the *Stage* (as Mr. Denny would have us hope) vye with the *Pulpit* for Piety, and Morality. But 'till this Miraculous Vertue be poured forth, *to turn the Hearts of the Disobedient to the Wisdom of the Just*; these *Sons of Zerviah*, or rather, *Children of Belial*, or the *Spirit that worketh in those Children of Disobedience*, would be too hard for you, had
we

we not some ground of hope to overcome them :
 1 John 4. 4. *Because greater is he that is in you,
 than he that is in the World.*

Therefore 5. and lastly, *Put on the whole Armour of God, the Armour of Righteousness on the right-hand, and on the left ; that ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand :* Being thus appointed ye are all over invulnerable, and consequently invincible. *Examine your selves whether ye be in the Faith ; look well to your State, look well to your Ways ; set up the Worship of God in your Houses ; and with all diligence keep your Heart, from whence are the issues of Life. Have a great care to cut off occasion from them that seek occasion to reproach you ; lest wherein ye glory, ye be found even as they. If you allow your selves in any known Sin, 'twill quite turn the edge of your Resolution. A secret Shame will so restrain you, that you'll be as a mighty Man astonied, as one that cannot find his hands ; at least, cannot find in his Heart to condemn and punish that in another, which in himself he allows. But if it be known, (as out it will come sooner or later ; for there is nothing covered, Matth. 10. 28. that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known.) O ! how will they triumph and insult ! What proud Boastings will they make ! If a vicious Reformer should light on such a sharp Strumpet, as Laronia in Juvenal, (we have many such witty Filts in this lewd Town) how might she play upon him at the same nettling rate, as she upon the Stoical Hypocrite ! *Felicia secula quæ te Moribus, &c.* Blessed Days when such as you set up for Reformers ! Now let the Town stand in Awe ; another Cato is drop'd down from*

Heaven ; but pray Sir, what Lady was that you pickt up t'other Day? *Ne pudeat dominum monstrasse Taberna*, and if I may be so bold, what's the Man's Name of the *Tavern* whither you carried her? However if you do not meet with such pointed *Satyr*, a much blunter reproof will pierce deep enough. *They will surely say to you this Proverb ; Physician heal thy self ;* begin at Home, and then 'tis time enough to look Abroad. 'Tis but a sorry Character at the best, *to be the Keepers of others Vineyards, when your own Vineyard ye have not kept :* and I'm sure you will ne're make 'em believe that 'tis Love to their Souls, sets you on work, when you shew no more to your own. Those were strains of *Heroick Charity* in *Moses* and *St. Paul* which you can hardly reach, and much harder possess the World with the belief of : that you could be content to have your *Names* (as the one, *Exod. 32. 32.*) blotted out of the book of God : or wish your selves accursed from *Christ* (as the other) for your *Brethren*, so they may be Saved.

I come now *Thirdly* to the last Head ; viz. The Objections, which is a *Topick* scarce toucht upon by any that I know of, but the Learned *Dr. Kennet*, and therefore to save time, I shall pass by all those which he has Answered, because he has done it so fully, that it cannot (I think) be mended, at least not by me. As, 1st. Your being *Voluntary Societies*, and in that respect dangerous Combinations. 2^{dly}, Being set a work by a *Pragmatical medling Humour*. 3^{dly}, The invidious Name of *Informer*. 4^{thly}, That it has prov'd in great measure *ineffectual*. For Answer to all which I refer you to his excellent Sermon : Only the last

I have something to say to, because the Case is since considerably alter'd.

But here Gentlemen, I hope ye can bear plain-Dealing, (for this is not a time and place to *dawb* in) if not, I must tell you, y've mistook your Man; for 'tis the only Talent I can pretend to. But that you may see ye have not only *plain*, but *fair* Dealing too; that like the *Cevennois*, I neither *give*, nor *take* Quarter: I shall begin with *my self*, and have an Eye upon my own Heart all the way.

1st, Then, the Question may justly be put; Do you practice what you Preach? Do you make Conscience to inform against *Evil-doers* your self? Otherwise you are like the *Lawyers*, *Luke 11.46*, *Who lade Men with Burdens grievous to be born, and touch not the Burdens with one of their Fingers*; Or like *Cowardly Commanders*, that put their Men in the very Mouth of Danger, but keep themselves out of *Gun-shot*. This I must needs own is an *home-thrust*; to put it by were not fair; and 'tis somewhat hard to receive it. Wherefore without any doubling I shall return a distinct Answer, and plainly *declare the thing as it is*.

I have return'd several of my own Charge for *Scandalous Immoralities* to the *Spiritual Court*; but nothing was done only some Money squeez'd out of them. But as to the *Civil Magistracy*, which I take to be the Sense of the Objection; I confess I have not. My *Reasons* are these; Whether they are sound I leave you to judge. 1. My own Hearers, I thought it not proper to exasperate by such rough Methods, lest it beget in them an invincible prejudice, and so defeat the ends of my Ministry: Otherwise had I no more occasion for an Interest in
their

their Affections then you ; I should matter no more their Resentments, or Reproaches, then the whistling of the Wind. 2. As to other Scandalous Persons ; Charity 'tis like may incline you to believe my Communication with such is but transient, and occasional. And I conceive it unbecoming the Messengers of the *Prince of Peace* to seize, and hale them to the *Magistrate* ; unless there were a proper *Officer* at hand, and in that case I should make no scruple about it. Now it is my practice to reprove all *Swearers*, *Drunkards*, &c. more sharply, or mildly as the Case, or the Condition of the Party requires : unless, sometimes (which I reckon amongst my *Presumptuous Sins*, and I pray God *lay them not to my charge*) I have been daunted, and over-aw'd by the Big Looks, and Pompous Appearance of mighty Sinners, and sensual *Wickedness in High Places*. But these Reasons (I confess) have not satisfied my Conscience ; and therefore I have tender'd my Service to some of your *Society*, to bear them Company at any time (but they thought not fit to accept it) when they go out in Parties to attack the common Enemy ; an Office which I could as Heartily embrace as *Micah's Levite* did the *Children of Dans* invitation, *Judges 18*. to go with them to their *New Conquests*, and I think it an higher Post of Honour, tho' without Pay, then to be *Chaplain of the Guards*, or a more Honourable Body.

I have Answered as well as I could for my self, tho' under Correction if I am out, and with an Hearty desire of being better informed. Now Gentlemen comes your turn, and let us consider what is said against you, and what may be pleaded in your Defence.

1. Then

1. Then it is Objected, that supposing your Design to be Good and Laudable, yet you began at the *wrong End*, and you might have had the Manners to have staid till your Betters led the way; that it did not become Persons in your private Capacity to appear so forward, at least without a *Patent* from the *Higher Powers*.

This is laid to your Charge: Now hear what I Answer in your Defence: (for you must know I am your *Counsel*, tho' not Learned in the *Law*, nor much in any thing else: and tho' you never gave me, nor would I have taken it, so much as a *retaining Fee*). Admitting the Charge that you began at the *wrong end*. I reply, what then? So you pursue right ends, and do no Body wrong, and take no ones Business out of his Hands, that is not willing to let it go; and so you aim at the Glory of God, the Good of your own and others Souls, and the true Honour and Welfare of your Country; which every Christian has an undoubted right to promote.

I further alledge (*for I have used Similitudes*) if a Fire began to break out in an House, and a Charitable Neighbour spying it first, hatten up with Water to quench it, whether the Owner (much more a passer by) would bid him come down, because he had no right; or because he got up on the wrong side; or because his House was *Insured*; and it belongs to the *Cuirassiers* of the *Insurance Office*; and not to him to take care about it: and that the Allusion is not Foreign to the matter in hand, appears from that passage, *Isa. 9.18. For Wickedness burneth as the Fire*; in *Sodoms* case it was literally true; and 'tis God's Mercy it has not been ours. For, *Can a Man*, *Prov. 6. 27. take Fire*

Fire in his Bosom, and his Cloaths not be burnt? Can one go upon hot Coals, and his Feet not be burnt? Now I conceive it not seasonable at such a juncture to stand upon Ceremonies; but that every one should set the best Foot foremost, and do what he can to prevent the threatening Mischief. Besides, if the wrong end did set out first, the right end may overtake it, if it please; and I suppose if we are once agreed upon the Work, there will be no dispute about precedence; and we shall not stick to give them the right Hand of Fellowship. I further say for you that this Objection comes now too late; whatever force it might once have had, it is now quite cast out of Doors: for since your happy setting out, our late King of truly Glorious Memory, Her Present Majesty, all the Lords Spiritual, many of the Temporal, with the Judges and others in Places of Authority have not barely owned you, but Headed you too. To sum up all; we (for now I have pretty well cleared you, I'll venture to cast in my Lot with you) have the Head, the Hands and the Feet; and if the slow Bellies will not come up with us, we heartily wish they may mend their pace, otherwise some People will be apt to say (and we cannot rule their Tongues) that they serve not the Lord Jesus, but their own ungodly Gut.

But 3dly, here arises another Objection, for we are fallen into those *Evil-days*, wherein *the Clouds return after the Rain*; one Cavil upon the Neck of another: but this comes from a different Quarter, the Parties whom we would reform. They desire to see your Commission whereby you are empowered to compel them to come in; *the Kingdom of Heaven* (they say) *suffers violence*, but offers none: and
because

because I would not do them so much wrong, as to weaken their Argument by ill-wording it; I'll give it you in one of their own phrases; [What will you take me, (said one) and carry me to Heaven upon your Back whether I will or no?] Now the stress of this Argument bears upon the same Foot with the *Toleration*, viz. *Liberty of Conscience*: and they take this rudeness, Gentlemen, the worse at your Hands, because it is presum'd that most of you are for the *Toleration*, and some of you need it; and why can't you be so Civil to do as you would be done by, and give what you take? For is it not reasonable that People should go their own pace as well as their own way to Heaven? Now they are for soft and fair; to halt, and sometimes turn out and Drink, (and it may be Whore) by the way: But you Gentlemen *Jehu-like* are for driving so furiously, that (they say) 'twould break their very Hearts to keep pace with you. They don't pull you back, and why should you push them on. Now I grant if this last Clause were exactly true, there would be something in what they say.

But if they don't pull us back I am sure they juggle us cruelly, and would fain if they could trip up our Heels. Besides 'tis not our own Cause that we Plead. For we hope our Foot standeth in an even place, that we have got pretty sure Footing, and it passes the skill of such Whifflers to supplant us. But we are concern'd, least that which is *Lame* be turned out of the way: and they shan't (if we can help it) like the Fat Cattle, *Ezek. 34. 21. thrust with Side and with Shoulder, and push all the Diseased with their Horns, till they have scattered them abroad.* Our fear is lest they lay a stumbling-block, or an occasion of falling in their weak Brethrens way;
and

and so through their Sin and Folly, and the Scandal arising from thence, those Souls should *perish for which Christ died*. We grant 'tis in their Power to do what they will with their own : and we don't go about (nor indeed can we) to hinder them. They may be as secretly Wicked, Lewd, and Worldly as they please ; we won't force them (they need not fear it) to an Heavenly Mind, much less to Heaven against their liking. But we would oblige them (if possible) to be Civil upon Earth, and let their Neighbours *live by them a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty*. To Conclude, tho' they will not bear us Company, nor mend their pace, we'll make them if we can, stand a little out of the way, that others may have room under them to go, and *that their Footsteps slip not*.

To this I may add 4thly, *Julian the Apostate's* Famous Objection ; and we'll lend it to the Parties before-mentioned, if it will help their Cause, or do them any manner of Service. When the Christians came to him for Justice, and Redress of their Wrongs, he us'd to tell them, Sirs, your Master set you another Lesson : *Not to resist Evil ; but whosoever shall smite you on the right Cheek to turn to him the other also, and if any Man take away your Coat, to let him have your Cloak also*. And our Objectors may draw much the same Inference as he did ; Does it become you to tug, and contend with your Neighbours, and make them better then they have a mind to be ? This is the Doctrine of 48 ; founding Dominion in Grace ; and *such Honour have all his Saints*. Consider we must each of us have our turn : Yours is to come ; *The Righteous shall have Dominion in the Morning*, but they that are Lewd, and they that *are Drunk are Drunk in the Night* : and you'll grant us

us so much, that *this is our Hour and Power of Darkness*. And if we are (as you say) *the Men of the VWorld, who have our Portion in this Life*: Why should you *who are not of the VWorld, whose Citizenship and Conversation is in Heaven*, set up for Controllers, and give us Laws in our own Country?

As to the first part of the Objection, I Answer, This were straining *Passive Obedience* a Peg higher than it was ever set yet. 'Tis time enough of Conscience to suffer, when Providence has brought us to such a Condition; and then we hope God will give us such a measure of Patience, that we shall not shrink from, nor sink under it. But to suffer when we need not, is a Work of *Supererogation*, and *Voluntary Humility*, which we Protestants never admitted. As to giving you Laws in your own Territories, we give you none; but only oblige you to keep your own Laws; those to which you have either actually, or virtually consented in Person, Parents or by Proxy; and by which you hold all your *Liberties, Rights and Properties*; or else ye might be as very *Slaves* as the *French*.

But 5. It is objected by the same Persons, that if these *Knights-Reformers* go on at this rate; and cut off all *Evil-doers*, (as they give out they will) from the *City of the Lord*: and pluck up every Plant that their *Heavenly Father* has not planted; we are like to have a fine World of it indeed. We shall all become *Puritans*: we shall have *Presbytery* come in like a Flood, which is as bad as the *overflowing of Ungodliness*, and ten times worse (in some Mens account) than a *deluge of Popery*. Besides we shall be nothing like the rest of the World, (*toto divisos orbe Britannos* indeed); and as distant from others in Customs as in Scituation. What, no Whoring, Swearing, Drinking,

ing, Gaming, &c. ? What a dull place would the Earth be if things come to this pass ? We had as lieu they should shut us up in a Cloyster, or condemn us to *Purgatory*. Instead of coming up to the Standard of the Age; the *Beaus Esprits*, the gay, well-bred, polite victorious People o' t'other side the *Channel*: we shall become like our poor, sneaking, beggarly Northern Neighbours o' t'other side the *Tweed*; that is as a late *Oracle* of our *Law* term'd it, (and I suppose some of you may have heard it from his Bawling Mouth) *Sniveling Saints*. And if the Gentlemen at *St. Germain's*, with their *Young Master*, should honour us with a Visit (as there are many who labour Night and Day to clear the Passage, and prepare the Way for him) *they, not to say you, will be asham'd* to find how the Nation is degenerate from what their *Old Master* left it. We were then a towardly promising People; almost debauch'd to a perfect ripeness for *Popery* and *Slavery*, and now (*quantum mutatus ab illo Hectore!*) relaps'd into the old lumpish Phlegmatick Spirit of *Godliness*, and *Morality*.

To draw this Objection to a Point, that we may see the whole force of it together: the design of it is to fright you with the formidable Bug-bear of *Phanaticism*: But I hope you have more Wit than to be so easily scar'd, or banter'd out of your Reason and Christianity. For supposing this Charge were true, (as it is altogether false and malicious) there's no such mighty matter in it; (for the Sound is more frightful far than the Sense). A *Phanatick* signifies no more than a *Mad-man*, and that's neither a Sin nor a Scandal; not a quarter so bad as a *Rakehell*, or a *Reprobate*. Besides, you'll have good honourable Company of all Ages; *Hos. 9. 7. The Prophet is a fool, the spiritual Man is mad*. Nay, a wiser than they
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or Solomon either, even our Great Master, in whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, was not only in the Jews account a *Phanatick*, but a *Demoniack* too, *John* 10. 20. And many of them said, He hath a Devil and is mad, why hear ye him? St. Paul no sooner came over from the *Pharisees*, but he became a *Phanatick*; and *Festus* was of Opinion that his *Pharisaical* Notions were the cause of it, *Acts* 26. 24. and *Festus* said with a loud voice, Paul thou art besides thy self: Much Learning doth make thee mad. Lastly, all the *Apostles* turn'd *Phanaticks* at a clap, and that by those very means (see how *Doctors* differ) as the *Jews* then concluded, which our Gentlemen would prescribe us, as the surest Antidote to keep us sound, viz. Drinking and good Fellowship; and no wonder when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together from all quarters (and I fancy some of our highest *Catholicks*, that most abhor a *Conventicle*, could dispense with it upon the same terms) to get their Mornings-draught amongst them. Nay, to come nearer home; *Archbishop Usher*, the Glory of our Church, was often scorn'd as a *Puritan*, (for *Phanatick* is a term of the latest Edition,) and our late excellent *Primate* was stil'd (as I have heard) by a mighty Man of Law, *A Phanatick in Lawn-sleeves*. And our present worthy *Prelates*, and true Fathers of the Church, are frequently revil'd by their very dutiful and obedient Children at the same Civil and Christian rate. Nay, tho' you were as staunch as Dr. *Hammond*, as high as *Arch-Bishop Laud*, while you are zealous for God, and espouse his Cause, you shall be sure meet with the same Language; and therefore look for no fairer quarter at their Hands. But let this be your Consolation, which *Musculus* often apply'd to himself when scorn'd

scorn'd and reproach'd for his Zeal, *Si insanimus Deo, &c.* if we are besides our selves, *alias*, if we are *Phanaticks*, it is to God.

There is one Objection more from your Enemies Quarters, which I must not pass in silence (though scarce worth mentioning) lest I should seem to lay my Thumb upon what I do not like; and that is concerning *strange Villanies* practic'd by you; or those whom you employ; as if innocent Persons had been circumvented, trick'd, trepan'd, and molested with malicious Prosecutions. I take this to be wholly the *forgery* of the *Father of Lies*, for it *bears his Image and Superscription* exact. For my part I never heard but one blind Story, from a Person of Figure indeed, but greatly disaffected to you, without naming Time, Place, Persons, or any other Circumstance; whence I presently concluded there was nothing in it: Wherefore I shall set this Objection aside (for I think 'twill keep cold) till I hear it made; or leave it to others who do know; for I know nothing of any such Matter.

I have now done with your Enemies till I hear further from them: I come now in the last place, (and then I shall have done with you too) to the Objections of Neuters, or half or false Friends: who thus shew Cause why they don't come in, and increate your Numbers.

1. Then say some, I love to live private, and am not for making a Noise and Bustle in the World. I Answer, If it be *Fame* you are afraid of, ne're trouble your Heads about that; for you will get no Renown (in this World at least) by such Adventures, take my Word for't. But the Bustle I don't like; *i. e.* if you would speak plain, and if not, we know your meaning; I
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love my own Ease, and am for no costly, painful, or troublesome Duties; but would (if possible) go to Heaven in a Featherbed. You are much in the right on't, and do so by all means if you can; *for men will praise ye when you do well to your selves.* But I very much doubt *this hope will make you Asham'd; and therefore 'twere better to Fear in time, lest a Promise being left of entring into that Rest which remaineth for the People of God, you should any ways seem to come short of it. For they that die in the Lord rest from their labours, and their works follow them,* Rev. 14. 13.

But 2^{dly}, Say others yet better Affected; You have our good Wishes; Our Hearts are with you. And pray, why not your Hands? Tho' absent in Body, we are present in Spirit. And pray, why not in Both? *If your Heart be divided now shall ye be found Faulty, or at least Tardy.* But to discover the weakness of this Plea, apply it but to other Duties, and then see how it will hold, (for this I think I have prov'd to be a Duty, and a first-rate Duty.) We are Well-Wishers to the Word, but *pray have us excus'd,* we can't well afford to be Hearers, much less Doers of it. We are Well-Wishers to Prayer, but we have not While, or Zeal to Attend it. I am loth you should try, because 'twould be a dangerous Experiment if it fail, Whether Good Wishes without Good Works will bring you to Heaven.

But 3^{dly}, Say others, who are yet farther Advanc'd, and not far from the Kingdom of God, You have our Hearts, our Prayers, nay, our Pur-

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may pass for Women, Aged, Sick, or Impotent Persons. For it comes up to that Rule of Acceptance, *Where there is a willing mind, it is accepted,* (2 Cor. 8. 12.) *according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.* But if you are fit for Service, (as you are bound, or I am mightily mistaken, to glorify God in your Body and Spirit, which are His) and if you are not, we won't take you in; Pray let us have your Persons too; for indeed we want Hands, and must pray you, as the *Man of Macedonia* did St. Paul, *Act. 16. 9. Come over and help us.* Were our Companies Compleat, we should not perhaps be in such haste for Recruits: But the Mischief on't is, the *Devil* (like the *French*) carries all by Numbers; and 'tis hard with an Handful to maintain our Lines, much more to take the Field against him who Attacks us with Hundreds of Thousands.

But 4^{thly}, Even this starts another Objection, (and I am bound in Conscience to answer it as fully as I can, because 'tis one of my own starting,) You have given us here (may the *fearful and unbelieving* say) a very formidable account of the present posture of Affairs; and *we have no Might nor Heart against this great Multitude*; such Intelligence is enough to make, *Ezek. 7. 17. all hands feeble, and all knees weak as water*: And to tell you the Truth, We have not Courage enough to face such a Foe: And if we are Cowards, 'tis not wholly our fault; for who can help natural Temper and Complexion? If indeed we undertook to command Fleets or Armies, Cowardice were a Crime, and the Dastard in that case is a Traytor and a Vil-

Villain : But we never pretended to Feats of Chivalry, and dare not set out for *Knights-Er-rant* (For so Gentlemen, I suppose you have heard the Sparks of the Town call you ; know to your comfort, that you are Dubb'd for your Service, and the Honour of Knighthood is a present Reward :) Besides, we have a Discharge to produce, under the Hand and Seal of the Lord of Hosts Himself, even from an *Holy War*, from coming to the help of the Lord against the mighty, Deut. 20. 8. The Officers shall speak unto the People, and say, What Man is there that is Fearful and Faint-Hearted ? let him go and return to his House, lest his Brethren's Heart Faint as well as his Heart.

There is a great deal, I must needs own, in this Objection ; for indeed this is a *Trying Time*, I mean in a *Military Sense*, (as the Word is us'd when they say, *Tryers of the Guards*,) that is, an *Hectoring time* ; such as the *Psalmist* seems to describe in the 55th *Psal.* which made him *Wish* he had wings like a Dove, to hasten his escape ; for I have seen v. 9. violence and strife in the City, day and night they go about it, &c. Bullying is come to such a desperate heighth, that an Honest Man dares not speak a manifest Truth, nor discharge a necessary Duty ; but he shall be dogg'd by *Rufians* ; and by a base secret Revenge Knockt o' th' Head, or Wounded and Maim'd. *England* abounds now with *Italian Bravo's* ; and what does it signify that we have Laws to secure us from open Oppression, if Peoples Mouths must be stopp'd, and their Hands ty'd up even from their Duty, for fear of *Clandestine Violence*, and

Affassination : and we cannot serve God or our Country, but we must have the Fate of *Sir John Coventry* before our Eyes. 'Tis like you may have heard the Story; however being short, and much to our purpose, 'tis worth while to relate it. There was a Motion made in the *Lower-House*, to sweep those Pestilent Vermin the Players out of their Kennel : The *Court-Party* oppos'd it, pleading their Merits, and what considerable Service they had done the Crown, (I suppose some had Fought for King Charles the first.) This unhappy Gentleman starts a Scurvy Question, Whether the *Actors or the Actresses* had been so Serviceable to the Crown ? But it cost him dear ; for going soon after by the *Horse-Guards* in his Coach, he was stopp'd and drag'd in, ('twas thought his Throat was design'd to be cut) but upon second Thoughts, they only Slit his Nose ; I suppose, to spoil his Speech for the future, that having such a Defect, he might the rather learn to keep his Tongue within his Teeth : And 'tis likely, the *Tryers of the Guards* were ordained for this end ; that they might have none but such harden'd thorough-pac'd Bravoes, as would boggle at nothing on this side Hell. See here a Sample of *French Discipline*, and as you like it, be fond of it. Now if we advise *with Flesh and Blood* upon such matters, it will suggest that wary *Maxim*, *Am. 5. 13. Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time, for it is an evil time.* The Devil now by his Crew goes about like a roaring Lion, to fright Men out of their Duty. For besides that the Players who set the *Queen's-Arms* on their Scandalous Bills, and subscribe themselves, (it may be

be in Complement, as we do in our Letters,) Her Majesty's Servants; are (as all the World knows) both *Stallions* and *Hectors* by their Calling, (and sure they have not the *Royal Authority* for that too.) The Soldiers who are maintain'd with the Nation's Money for our Defence, are the Terror of Her Majesties best Subjects. The Martyrs of your Society (for Martyrs they are, as good as any in the *Rubrick*; and *their death as precious in the sight of the Lord*, as even St. Stephen's, who was too in a manner Mobb'd,) were Murther'd by those Sons of Violence, those rough *Caterpillars*, Jer. 51. 27. Who are only *skilful to destroy*.

A Neighbour of mine (who is one of you) shew'd me not long since a *formal Declaration* of War, sent him by a Soldier, whom he had inform'd against for Swearing; (tho' 'twas much in a private Sentinel, and somewhat more honourable than the *French Hector's* practice) to declare before he began Hostilities; the Style was remarkable (whether drawn up by a Secretary of War, or the Clerk of the Regiment, I know not; but thus it run, [*Thou Immortal Informing Dog, thy Days are Number'd, I'll surely be the death of thee.*]) Are not we, Gentlemen, come to a fine pass, when a Subject dares not keep the Laws for fear of these Fiends? I have liv'd some while as it were in the Mouth of 'em, and Fought with Beasts (as St. Paul at *Ephesus*) almost these Four Years; and should know somewhat of *the men, and their Communication*; They Swear and Curse as duly as they Speak; they scour the Streets at all Hours of the Night; Protect the Whores; D ; Insult,

Insult, Abuse, and sometimes Murther the Watch; and what can be done with them? Their Officers claim the Cognizance of the Case; and truly their *Discipline* is just as good as that at *Doctors-Commons*; and no wonder, for the Commanders are many of them more Debauch'd and Prophanes than their Men. For though I have often heard of *Reformades* and *Reformed Officers*, yet I never once heard of *Reformers* amongst them; nor as long as I have been Acquainted with you, did I ever see any of that Cloath; nor indeed, many of my own in your *Societies*.

But all this is no News, for Soldiers and Blades of the Town to be Hectors; but so general is the Contagion of late, that Magistrates, Gentlemen of the Long Robe, Physicians, nay, and Ministers are Bullies too; as if they strove who should be foremost in the *French Mode*, to please their *new-expected Masters*. Is it not a burning Shame in a *Christian*, a *Reformed Kingdom*, (what *Pagan Rome* would have blush'd at, and *Cato* or *Tully* have cry'd, *O Tempora! O Mores!*) That a Son of Violence, a Man of the Sword, should sit in one of our highest Courts of Justice, in an Office so nearly related to the *Crown* and the *Peace*, (as it were to brave the Nation, and bid them expect Justice there, if they dare,) after having so insolently broke the Peace, contemn'd the Laws, and defid'd the Crown; by Challenging, Abusing, Assaulting, and Outraging, (and that in *Westminster-Hall*, within sight of so many Courts of Justice,) one of the worthiest Gentlemen for Learning, Piety, and true Bravery, that this Age can boast of; a Mem-
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ber of Parliament, (and what is more Honourable in the sight of God) an active, and very valuable Member of your Societies ; Because he durst not defy God and the Government, and go the *shortest Way* to Hell ; or perhaps, because he did not understand a Sword so well as himself. It is not unlikely, he, or Ruffians for him, may serve me so too : But I thank God I am *Bully-Proof*, and fear no *Hectors*, by what Name or Title soever dignifi'd or distinguish'd.

Hence we may see there is still abundant cause for that Charge from God, *Josh. 1. 7. Only be thou very courageous, that thou may'st observe to do according to all the Law, &c.* When to keep the Law is as much as a man's Life is worth.

But still this is no just Excuse for Cowardice in the discharge of our Duty ; but only shews the Necessity of Courage ; which is to be had as well as Wisdom, or any other Grace, for asking. And St. Paul who had so often past the Pikes, declares, *I can do all things, Phil. 4. 13. through Christ which Strengtheneth me.* Otherwise it would be very hard for the *Fearful* to be put into that Black List, or rather dead Warrant, *Rev. 21. 8. especially since being stout-hearted commonly makes men far from righteousness.*

But after all, the Trial is not so fierce and fiery as some may fancy ; these blustering Blades are nothing near so terrible as an Army with Banners ; nor do their big swelling Words sound so loud as a Cannon, or a Mortar. And if it should be your Lot to be press'd or trepann'd (as some have been, for there's Tricks in all Trades) into the Fleet or Army, you must have far greater

Terrors set in array against you : Which, yet some voluntarily encounter for a vain Notion of Honour; and others for Eight-pence a day : But the Captain of your Salvation will give you otherguise Pay, and Preferment. Besides, *who is he that shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good ?* The Devil is an arrant Coward; face him, and he flees; and all his Vassals are like him: Sin is weak as Water; and Guilt will tremble at the Sound of a shaken Leaf; and the wicked flee when none pursues. They are sturdy Rebels indeed against God, but meer Slaves to Man; and thro' fear of death, are all their life-time subject to bondage. They know, if they dye in the Fray, they are damn'd; as a great Dueller frankly confess'd to me, That he never enter'd the Devil's Lists, (which he had often done) but with this full Perswasion; that if he lost his Life, his Soul was undone for ever. Only Confidence in his Skill, and the fear of being Posted, (and as his Expression was, Piss'd on) (perhaps with the help of Brandy or Opium) buoy'd up his Spirits from sinking. So that their Bravery is indeed nothing else but a baser sort of Fear, or Cowardice in another Dress.

But if God should honour you with the laying down your Lives in this Glorious Cause: If to you it should be given, (and a signal Favour it is) not only, to strive against sin, but to resist unto blood; (the Rules before laid down, as to your State and Life, being first observ'd) I can upon better warrant pass my word, than one is said to have done to the Soldiers in the *West*, My Soul for yours, ye shall be with Christ the same day

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in Paradise; and with the noble Army of Martyrs, praise him for ever.

But now 5^{thly}, comes an Objection that requires Courage on my part; (and I bless God, he has given it me): for I foresee it will disturb a *Wasp's-Nest*, and I expect to have them buzzing toward the Door; but yet I cannot baulk it, without injury to God and Truth. For when we exhort some People to be zealously affected in this good Matter, they cannot deny the Goodness of it; but they are (it seems) pre-engag'd. A civil Answer, and satisfactory too, if it were sound: Their Zeal is all bespoke, and they have none to spare for this Service; because it is all taken up already for the *Church*; and they must not have too many Irons in the Fire, lest some of them cool. But sure the *Church* may stay a little, till God is serv'd; for after Him is Manners; supposing both Interests could not be carried on together.

Now the Stumbling-block that these Gentlemen seem to start at, is your Name of *Reformers*; and I could almost wish (but now 'tis too late to change it) that you had pitch'd upon some other, as *Amenders*; or that *Isa. 58. 12. Restorers of paths to dwell in*; this had been as proper as any; for truly there had been no Place for Piety, no Living in the World, if some such Course had not been taken. The Name of *Reformation*, they apprehend, threatens the Church, because it made such a Change in it an Age and a Half ago; and they fear, we intend some new Alterations. Whereas, God knows, we think it enough (and more than we can compass) to re-
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form the Streets, the Markets, the Taverns, and especially the Play-Houses; and sure none of these are *Holy Ground*. I would not be mistaken, (but I greatly fear I shall,) A true hearty Friend of the *Church*, I entirely love and honour: But it provokes me beyond all patience, and 'tis enough to make even a wise man mad, to hear a Company of Miscreants, as wicked almost as the Devil could wish to have them; not only *usurp*, but *engross* the Church: as if it were their *Enclosure*; and all besides were *Heathen Men and Publicans*; whereas they say, they are *Jews*, and are not; but do lye, and really belong to the *Synagogue of Satan*; and care not a rush, if all the Churches in Town were in the State of 62, *St. Pauls*, and the Abbey not excepted; so their *Two Cathedrals*, in *Drury-lane*, and *Lincolns-Inn-Fields*, were but safe; the Sweet-Singers, and Anthems of which, charm them far more, and raise a brisker Devotion, than all the *Quires* in *Christendom*.

I would not have you think, that I speak here *without Book*, tho' I preach without Notes. For I have met with this Answer both in Town and Country, again and again; when I have reprov'd Sots, Swearers, &c. (especially when they have been Mellow, or rather Maudlin, as they call it;) I am for the *Church*; I love the *Church* at my Heart. Whether they mean it, by way of Privilege, that they have a *Church-Licence* for their Crimes; or by way of Atonement, that this their Zeal makes an amends for their Misdemeanors; I never stood to enquire: For such Impudence, I confess, puts me to a Non-plus; and all the Reply I can make, is, I am
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sorry for it ; but whilst you are such *unruly Members*, the *Church* (if I know any thing of Her Mind) had rather have your Room than your Company. Now I love at my Soul to uncase an Hypocrite, (and am content, if I prove such, to be serv'd for my self) especially such bold brazen Hypocrites, who would face the World down against all Sense and Reason, and even Matter of Fact, that they do, or can love any *Church* at all. *Haters of God*, and *Lovers of the Church*, one would think were a Riddle, if not a Contradiction ; and yet 'tis an exceeding common case now-a-days. Therefore I proceed to enquire what they mean by the *Church* ; but this touches upon a Sore, and they presently grow sour or sullen ; and I could never yet see any of these Gentlemen Masters of so much Temper, as to give a Man a Civil Answer, or let one into their Meaning ; and I hope this Publick Query may procure another *Letter from the Living to the Living*, by their Principal Secretary, or some abler Hand to clear up the Point for the World's satisfaction. For their *Church* hitherto, and the *Atheists Nature*, are ἀσπλάγιστα ; *Words unutterable*, Terms too high to be explained ; Subjects that can neither be seen, felt, heard, nor understood ; and unless they will define their *Shibboleth* or (if they were not profess'd Enemies to canting, of all things in the World) I could find in my heart to call it their *Cant* : we must be left in the dark, and know not how to follow them, though we would never so fain : For if the Word be ambiguous, and the *Trumpet give an uncertain Sound*, who can prepare himself to the *Battel*. But to give them their due ;
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I never hear the *Church* of God or Christ, here they are wondrous tender of taking those Sacred Names in vain ; though in other Discourse they make one Word in five ; no, nor the *Protestant* or *Reformed Church*, but only the *Church* ; it may be the Church of *Priester-John*, or the *Mufti*, for any account we can get from them.

Wherefore, supposing they mean the *Church of England*, let us proceed to pick out their Sense by the best Light we have, till they'll be pleas'd to afford us a better. I have so much Charity for them, as to conclude, they cannot be so gross in their Notions, as to look no farther than the Walls and the Glebe ; (though some too are sottish enough to stick even here.) Well then, do they mean by the *Church*, the Heads or Rulers of it (as we commonly mean when we say the *Government*) ; God be prais'd, it was never better headed, those Chairs never better fill'd since *England* was a Nation ; and God grant they may never be worse, and no Sober Man (I believe) will complain : But these Gentlemen are quite of another mind, and what they say of their *Spiritual Fathers*, is too well known, and unfit for this place. Well then, to proceed, do they mean by the *Church*, the *Articles of Religion* ? (that's the usual Standard to judge of a Church by), viz. the Confession of their Faith ? No, these will not do. There are four or five of them, and amongst the rest one terrible long one (as long as four others) with a Name almost as unsizable as *Latitudinarianism*, which look too much *Geneva-ward*, to suit the *Genius* of our Superfine, improv'd *Arminian* Age. Our Honest
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Forefathers the Bishops and Dignitaries at the *Synod of Dort*, condemned the *Arminian* Tenets as manifest Errors; and our Parliament in 1627, or thereabouts, complain'd of the increase of *Papists* and *Arminians*, among their Grievances, or the growing Evils of the Age, which called for a speedy redress: But *Tempora Mutantur*, &c. our New Church-Champion (if I don't mistake him) can see no Reason why the *Scriptures* should not be taken in an *Arminian* Sense: We are sorry for that, but can't help it, only we pray that God would bless his Eyesight. To proceed in our Quest, Do they mean by the *Church* the *Cannons* or *Homilies*; (these our Gentlemen know just as much of, as the *Twelve Tables* at *Rome*, or the *Laws* of the *Medes* and *Persians*) not one of the Laity in Ten, has ever seen them, and scarce one in Five Hundred has Read them through; and if they had, they would find the Doctrine of the one too Sound, and Old-fashion'd: and the Discipline of the other, too strict and precise for their turn; and we should quickly have them in another Tune. Well then; is it the *Liturgy*? (for there is nothing else left to serve for their Standard) Alas! this has too much of Scripture; too many *Psalms* and *Lessons* for their Nice Palates; and must be dress'd, and dight up with exquisite Musick to make it go down with them. And as much as they pretend to admire it, (for 'tis all over Pretence) they very seldom come at it; (but that may be, lest too much Familiarity breed Contempt, and because Admiration is best kept up at a distance.) One of these Zealots, who seem'd to be a Pillar, could not-
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withstanding his great Respect (if the World has not wrong'd him) in the midst of his Devotion, (sure it was not a sudden Rapture of Divine Love) turn the most excellent part of it into a Leud, Blasphemous Jest; And I'll undertake you may find these Blessed *Churchmen*, five times at a Play, and ten times at a Tavern, for once at Divine Service. I suppose you know the New Distinction, ('tis a nice one, and such as *Scotus* and *Aquinas* with all their Subtilty could never hit on:) *Of the Church, and For the Church*. One comes constantly to Church, Morning and Afternoon: he is *with us*, but yet against us, or not heartily for us; another comes once in a Moon, and then it may be, half Drunk; and smells so strong of Brandy no one can sit near him; and so takes up the Room of two better than himself; (this is all the Church gets by him,) and yet he is Violently *for the Church*; and *Hic vir, hic est*, this is the Man for their Turn. Indeed to be too constant, and serious in all its Ordinances, especially if for two Sermons a Day, is with them an ill sign, it has a *Phanatic Aspect*; and if they would venture to speak out, this is their sense at the bottom: He drives the Point too far, he's *in Good Earnest* for the Church; he's a Dangerous Person.

To Sum up our Evidence; these Gentlemen's *Churchship* is not to be found in the Book of *Articles*, of *Canons*, of *Homilies*, nor of *Common-Prayer*, nor in any Book that I know of, but (what I never could see, nor can say any thing to), the *Book of Sports*. Yes, there's one Book all over *Canonical*; and with them the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*,

Truth; the Author of it came to an ill End, but *his End was according to his Works*; (for the Devil had never a more Serviceable Tool); and that is *Hudibras*; one *Canto* of which in their Account, is worth all the *Cant* of *St. Pauls Epistles*; and I've known some, who were Train'd up for Champions, have got every Line of *Hudibras* by Heart before they could say one *Chapter of the Bible*, or had Read it perhaps as far as *Exodus*. And no wonder if it were had in such high esteem; when a Defender of the Faith declared at the Council-Table, it was the best Book that ever was Printed; and yet I think the *Bible* had then pass'd the Press.

To conclude, The Scrutiny of a *Church-man* is made now-a-days by a few upstart, paultry Terms, and Usages; of which, with my best Eyes, I never could see the least hint, or mention in all the *Canons, Rubrick, Rituals*, nor any Publick Authentick Instrument of the *Church* whatsoever (and I think I am reasonably well Read in them all:) And the whole World knows we hold no *unwritten Traditions*; but use this as one of our best Pleas against the *Papists*; that we deal above-board, and let every one fairly see in Black and White to what they must Conform. Now these new Marks of Church-Membership, which serve as *Tests* or *Criteria* to find out a Phanatick Wolf in Sheeps Cloathing, are these which follow.

1. To call the Communion-Table an *Altar*, which supposes a Sacrifice; and I never heard of any outward Sacrifice among Christians, but that of the *Mass*.

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2. Conformably to this term, to make a profound Reverence or Congee to, or toward it; which by the way, is far more reasonable in the *Church of Rome*, for they have something to Plead in its Defence: *viz.* that they have their God before them in the *Pix*, as a present Object of their Devotion. I have been very Inquisitive about the true *Rise*, and *Reason* of this Practice; but *how*, or *when* it came up, I could never get an Account, nor indeed any other but this, from the most Learned and Judicious of my Acquaintance; that 'tis a *Laudable Custom*.

3. To turn their Faces toward the *East* when they repeat the Creed, (and many, when they perform other parts of their Devotion:) for which the only Precedents I can meet with, are those Twenty five Men, whom the Prophet *Ezekiel* caught, *Ezek. 8. 16.* (and I think he does not much commend them for it,) *With their Backs toward the Temple of the Lord, and their Faces toward the East*, but they had some Reason on their side, for it seems they were Worshipping the *Sun*.

4. Upon pain of *Phanaticism* to call the *Christian Sabbath* by no other, but the Old *Heathenish* Name of *Sunday*, and accordingly to make as *Heathenish* an use of it: to scruple no Visits, Journeys, Diversions, &c. but to end it at Noon: for a *Sabbatarian* ('tis well known) is of all others, the Rankest Phanatick. I suppose 'twas in the Strength of this Church-Principle, that some great Patriots and Pillars of the Church (whom I happen'd lately to over-hear comparing Notes,) had been late at a Tavern on a *Sunday-night* in a close Consult, for Securing the Church; and by
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good Token, one of them went away without paying the Reckoning.

5. Of late, to vilifie the Memory of King William, and throw all the Dirt upon Him they can, (of which I have, to my sorrow, too abundant proof) yet I take him to be the best Friend the Church of England has had for at least fifty Years before; perhaps, since the Conquest: Notwithstanding that Perilous Innovation, not in the Church, but in His own Chappel, (as sure He might do what He would in His Own) of having the Litany, and other Prayers, rather said than sung: For I defie Malice it self to prove any other Invasion or Encroachment upon the Church, against Him.

6. What I know not well whether it be a Civil or Sacred Test, (a Sacred it should be by being constantly uncovered at it); and whether it requires Constant or but Occasional Conformity, I leave to the Learned; To drink the Church's Health: And I suppose the Rule is, as in other Cases, Fill as ye love Her; and She says, as Cant. 5.1. O Friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly. Now I must confess, this is no Rigid Test, if the Liquor be good; nay, I'll grant 'tis a pleasant, and agreeable, but in my Mind no very Reasonable nor Acceptable Service: When I know the Mind of Christ farther about it, I shall readily alter my own. Now if such Drink-offerings may pass for Devotion, we need not compass Sea and Land to gain Profelytes; for I'll undertake for enow who (put only Tavern for Temple) shall vye with Holy Anna for Perseverance, and like

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her never depart from their Devotions, but stick to them *Night and Day*.

Now 'twould be fair to let the World know in what part of all our Constitutions these Duties are to be found: For to Father, or rather Mother their *Spurious* Brats on the Church, and lay 'em at her Door, who no where owns 'em for hers; and then to fall foul upon others, and call them all to naught, for not taking them for *genuine* and *legitimate*: when they themselves cannot assign the *Time*, or *Place* of their *Birth*, or shew so much as their *Names* in the *Church-Register*; this appears to me the very height of *Arbitrary Power*, and *Injustice*.

Now I don't think my self bound to regard every new Whim, at least 'till the *Publick Imprimatur* be set to it: If some People advance new Notions of a Middle State, and Prayers for the Dead, and others make *Fine Apostrophe's* to Saints (which some would be ready to call Prayers) and then to bring their own Conceits into vogue, cry, the Church, the Church; I can't apprehend my self bound by virtue of *Canonical Obedience* to follow the Cry. I owe Obedience to my Lawful Superiors both in Church and State (so nothing sinful be enjoin'd), but still I have so much Wit as to distinguish between *Divine* and *Humane*, between *Canon* and *Canon*; that of *Scripture* and that of *Convocation*; and to pay the just and proper deference to each: and not give unto *Cæsar*, no, nor *St. Peter* neither, *the things that are God's*.

It has been my hard Lot to be misrepresented of late to some of our Ecclesiastical Governors, upon the *Sixth Article*, the Church's Health (tho' with very false and unfair Aggravations) as a Back-friend, or a Sly Enemy to the Church (though none that know me will lay Craft or Dissembling to my Charge); whereas I think my self a better Friend to it than my Accusers: I have done it some little Service, I have brought some to a better Opinion of it, and I think I ne'er brought any Scandal upon it: I never was charg'd, in above a dozen Years, with any the least Contempt, or Failure of Duty; I never got one Penny by't, (and, I'm perswaded, never shall), nor indeed by any Party whatsoever. But I wash an *Ethiop*; for it will be reply'd, *Out of thine own Mouth will we judge thee*: This tedious Canting Harangue is as sure a sign of a *Pharisee*, as [The Lord] was with Bishop Gardiner, *Symbolum Hereticorum*, the Mark of an *Heretic*.

I may seem perhaps to some, in answering these Objections, not serious enough, or rather light and jocular; and that the Whole is more like a Satyr than a Sermon; but I take that Text *Prov. 26. 5. Answer a Fool according to his Folly, lest he be wise in his own Conceit*, to be more than a Counsel, even an express Command. And I have the Example of *Elijah*, *1 Kings 18. 27. And Elijah mocked them and said, Cry aloud; for he is a God, either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or in a Journey, or, peradventure, he sleepeth, and must be waked*. No one supposes him here to be strictly serious, or but a little satyrical; nay, 'tis perhaps, the sharpest Irony, or Sarcasm rather, we ever

met with; and sharper than *the Knives and Lancers* wherewith his Adversaries cut themselves: If we Fight not such Antagonists with their own Weapons there is no end: for *Scoff* and *Banter* is the whole of their Argument; and if we offer them any thing serious, they have a speedy Reply to turn it all into *Burlesque*. Tho' if we would use the utmost Gravity, the Subject will not bear it: and to be serious about a trifling Impertinence is not only absurd, but almost impossible.

I come now to the last Objection, which I purposely kept to bring up the Rear, because I must debate with you a little upon it; and here I shall be truly serious, (as the Subject requires.) 'Tis said your Work seems at a stand, nay, some give out, (but I hope they'll be found Lyars) that there's little or nothing done now-a-days in it but hearing Reformation-Sermons. That there is a visible abatement of Success cannot be deny'd, unless we will give all our Senses the Lie; and if my Eyes and Ears are my own, (and I do sometimes look abroad in the World) things are not right, nor as they us'd to be: The two Ends of the Town were always very loose, and I'm afraid always will be; for when Seamen and Soldiers, Footmen and Players, begin to Reform, I shall be apt to conclude the World's near an end: But the City is us'd to be more Sober and Civiliz'd; I could have gone some while since from the *Tower* to the *Temple* without hearing an Oath; but now they are almost as rife as in the *Suburbs*, however, much rife than they were. Pray, Gentlemen, where must the Stoppage lye, for a Stoppage there is, or Wickedness could
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not so strangely and suddenly overflow? I dare not look up to the Higher Powers; King *Amaziah* has taught me better Manners, 2 Chr. 25. 16. *Art thou made of the King's Council? Forbear, why shouldest thou be smitten?* And another *Amaziah*, (tho' not of the same Dignity) has back'd it with a like Advice, *Hos. 7. 12. O thou Seer, flee unto the Land of Judah, and there eat Bread, &c.* 'Tis dangerous meddling with those above us, but I hope a modest Enquiry may give no Offence. As to Her Majesty, 'tis plain She has done Her Part, She has sent forth Precept upon Precept, Proclamation upon Proclamation, and strictly charg'd them to be executed with Vigor. Is the Failure in the subordinate Magistrate? God forbid. 'Tis true we have had a great and surprising Alteration made amongst them; but we must suppose for the better, and not for the worse; Or why was it made? We should always presume there are good Reasons for what our Governors do, tho' we are not able to conceive them; *for the Heart of Kings is unsearchable.* The Fault therefore, Gentlemen, must lye at your Door; and clear your selves of it as well as you can. I am afraid you are *grown weary of well-doing*, and begin to *faint in your Minds*; that you have sunk under Discouragements, and been ready to throw up your Design as desperate. But you'd say if you durst, *Is there not a Cause?* Ay, that there is, and a manifest one too, if any One had the Courage to declare it. Come, Gentlemen, to be plain with you; ye have had many admirable Sermons: But 'tis not every one that dares tell you the Truth; but (God be prais-

ed) I dare speak the boldest Truth; and that before the haughtiest Worm, or the proudest Assembly of Treacherous Men under the Sun. The Case is this, (and it cannot be hid) tho' some think it should not be shewn, but I am not of their Mind: You are foully trick'd and abus'd, you are fed with fair Hopes, and amus'd with goodly Pretences, yet nothing is done nor intended to be done in your Favour, but much to oppose you: In the mean while, your Money is spent; your Time wasted; your Zealous Endeavours scorn'd, hated, and ridicul'd; your Attempts baffled; your Persons affronted, insulted, assaulted; your Lives threatned, and often endanger'd; and this not only conniv'd at, but secretly encourag'd.

These, you'll say, are strange Expressions; but no more strange than true: And what I have said, I'll stand to, let who dare call me to a Publick Account for't, as soon as they please: I shall be forth-coming; and then they may hear a little more of my mind, and more perhaps than they'll be willing to hear. I know my Commission, and my Call from God to the Service of this Day; and can produce it, (if need be.) Ezek. 26. *Tho' briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions, be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks; tho' they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will bear, or whether they will forbear; for they are most rebellious. Come; God will not be mock'd; and Truth must be spoken where he is concern'd; (for as to State-Matters I ne'er trouble my Head:) and shall be spoken while I have*

have a Tongue, tho' all the Devils in Hell and Incarnate conspire to stifle it; nay, tho' I were sure to be cudgell'd or Coventry'd, or have my Throat cut the next hour: I'll go one Step further, thro' *Christ who strengtheneth me*; tho' I were sure (as that *Glorious Martyr, Monsieur Brousson*, by that expresse Image of Satan, the King over all the Children of Pride, that Prince of Bullies, *Hector le Grand*, (for Hectors are always both Cowards and Cruel) who would not leave one Grain of Liberty or Piety in the World:) to be broken upon the Wheel. And who knows how soon I may fall into his hands? For there are many amongst us, who would sell their Prince, their Country, their Church, their Souls, (those they'd sell for Six-pence, for they don't believe they have any) to bring his Iron Yoke upon our Necks; if it were but to be no more plagu'd with *Reformation*. Then they know *Claret* will be cheap, *French Whores* will abound; (which will sink the Price) and he'll give them leave to be as wicked as they please; (which is all they want) so they but acknowledge his Will for Supreme, and fall down and worship the *Golden Image which he has set up*. And he is as truly worshipp'd as any of the *Roman Heathen Emperors*. For (besides what I have often heard) that the Officers and others when they mount the Guards pay their Devoirs to His Statue: a Gentleman shewed me, not long since, an *Inscription* taken off His Statue at *Arles*, which is as rank *Blasphemy* as ever *Nebuchadnezzar* or *Nero* were guilty of. *Imperatoriae Ludovici XIV. Majestati, Iconicum hoc Simulacrum, quasi Præsens Numen suspiceret,*

Civitas Arelatensis Senatus Consulto publice coli jussit :
 We may render it (though not exactly) thus, *To the Imperial Majesty of Lewis XIV. the City of Arles by a Decree of Parliament, has commanded this Statue, bearing His Resemblance, as if they lookt up to a Present Deity, to be publickly worshipt.*

The World is not Blind, though through fear it be Dumb ; every one sees which way things go, though most think it Wisdom to hear and see and say nothing; but our Charge runs otherwise, *Isa. 58. 1. Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions.* And I hope I may add in those words of the Prophet *Micah*, (for Scripture may be quoted without Offence ; and if it happen to hit the case too exactly we can't help that ;) *3.8. But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin. Hear this I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob ---- that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity.* Who don't know how many bitter Enemies of Godliness, obstinate Non-jurors, and reputed Friends of the French, (for that Triple-League between Rome, France, and Hell ; that threefold Cord, can never be untwisted, though I hope it will be broken,) are in Places of Publick Trust ; for Places of Profit only I should never grudge them, so it be not their Power to Sell and Betray us ? How many Grave, Sober, Pious Magistrates, Men that Feared God and Hated Sin, have been put out of Commission, and their Places fill'd up with wild, debauched, hectoring Blades, who Swear, and Drink, and Game ; whom when you, Gentle-
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men, have hunted from Bowling-Green to Tavern; to give Information against Offenders, they shall Curse you for precise *Phanatical Dogs*; and if you press the Point upon them, shall Cane you, or Draw upon you, or Expose you to the Scorn and Rage of the Rabble. There are some *Counties* where for many Miles round they are in the same State as *Laiish*, *Judg.* 18. 7. *There was no magistrate in the land that might put them to shame in any thing*, unless for discharging their Duty to God; and for this, they will Shame them abundantly. I know where one of these Egregious Magistrates, and Blessed Guardians of the Peace, not long since rode on Horseback Drunk into a Meeting-House, and ask'd them, *What they did there Worshipping the Devil?* But never was call'd to an Account for the Riot. I was further assur'd by a Person of Note, (whom I'll name when call'd to it), That one at the Top of the Law, declared you were a *Publick Nuisance*; a *Nuisance* ye are indeed, to the Devil and his Party; the greatest they were ever plagu'd with since Christ and his Apostles were on Earth: and I trust you will be a greater still; but ye are unto God, *2 Cor. 2. 15. a sweet savour of Christ in them that are sav'd, and in them that perish.* You are at vast Expence to prosecute Players for their Monstrous Prophaneness: but don't mistake your selves, they have more Friends in Court than you; they have Counsel to Plead for them without Fee; they have the advantage of any slip or error in the Indictment, not only allow'd but shewn them too; (and perhaps he that draws it up for you may betray you,) and if they

30 Plain English.
they are Convicted (because sometimes there is no Evasion without throwing off the Vizor, and there is a time for all things,) they have enow ready to make a Purse and pay their Fine. For Fine is Penalty enough for such petty venial Crimes as Blasphemy, and abominable Idolatries, in Swearing by and Adoring *Heathen Gods*, that is, *Devils* ; who are as much pleas'd with this Homage as that of the Ancient *Pagans*. Those Honourable Persons must not be *Pillory'd*, 'twould spoil their Reputation ; and they would not appear afterwards with a good Grace on the Stage ; and so the Town would suffer in its *dearest Diversions*. Open War against *God and Christ*, and good *Manners*, stabs at the very Heart of Religion have no spice of Sedition, but are (I warrant) consistent with Loyalty, (and you may remember the time, if you don't, I do, when Lewdness and Loyalty were made by some the whole Duty of Man.) That Guilt and Penalty belongs to those rash unwary Zealots who have no more Wit and Manners than to tell Tales, and know more than their Betters would have them. It is not long since I had occasion to wait upon one who is now in an high Post of Justice, and I found him Drinking, and most familiarly conversing with a very Infamous *Player* ; and such a Magistrate is like to be hearty in bringing Bosom-Friends to condign Punishment.

I'll say no more, for I have said enough already, till Authority shall question me for what I have said. I shall only make this short Application, and I pray remember it ; for there may be Something in it, and More than every one imagines,

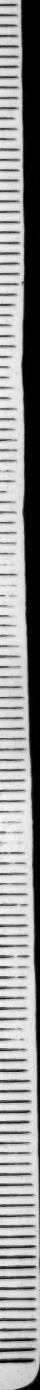
gines. God has been mock'd, abominably mock'd, and he has highly resented it, and shewn his Resentment; He has loudly warn'd us by a Voice from Heaven; *A Voice full of Terror and Majesty, the late dreadful and unexampled Storm.* He has been mock'd again since that; mock'd the same day, by false, feigned Pretences of Zeal for him; when all was directly levell'd against him; mock'd soon after by that *Assembly of Mockers* the Players, in their *Macbeth*, and *Tempest*. He seems to put up the Affront, and waits, that he may be Gracious to us; and I conceive, he may warn you once more by me, that ye be no more Mockers, lest your hands be made strong. But beware of the Third time; for if he speaks again, I'm afraid, he'll speak with a vengeance.

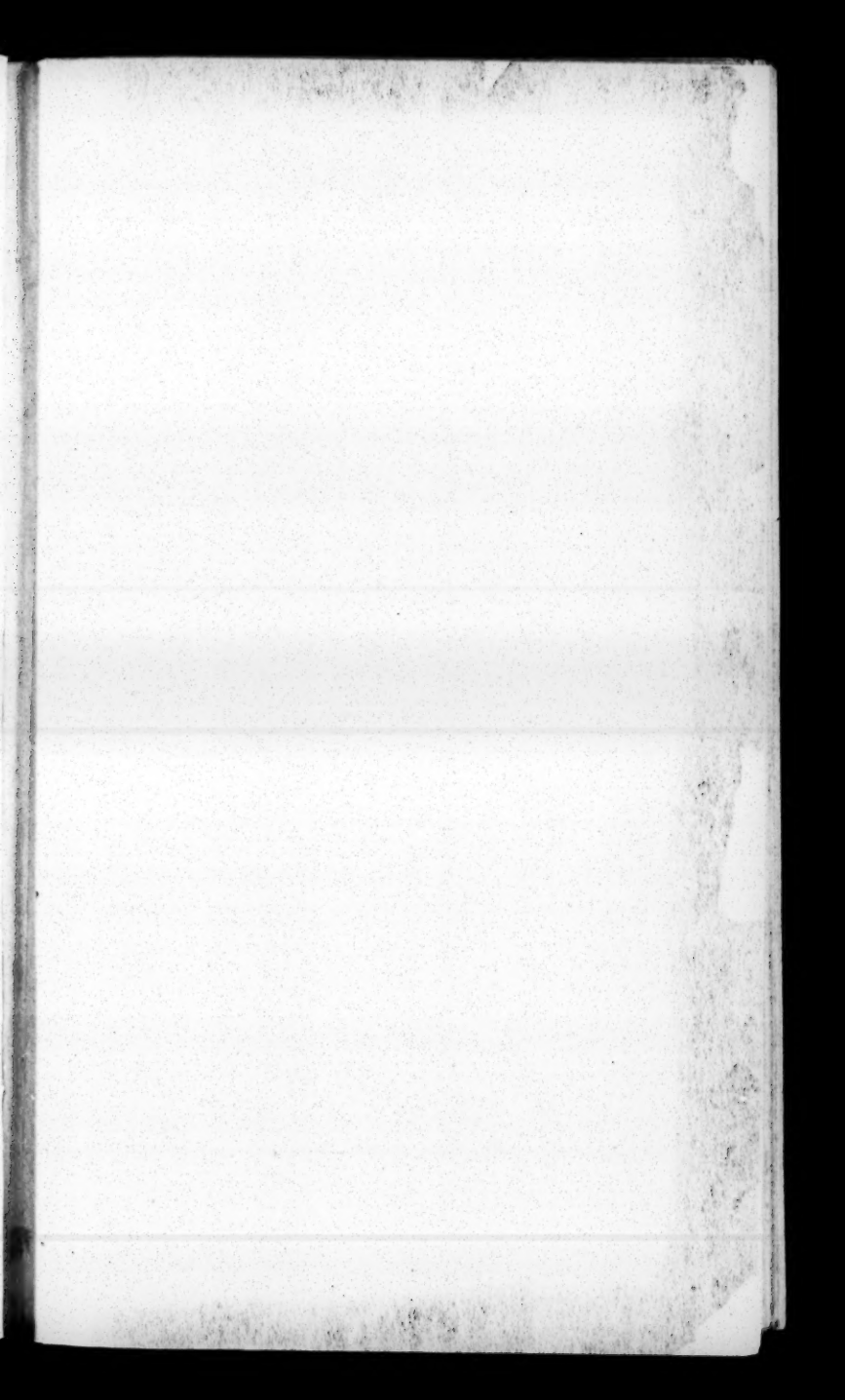
I am sensible I have said enough to bring down an Hurricane upon my own Head; and let it fall when and how it will, *my heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.* Let what will come of it, so Christ be magnified; I therein rejoyce, yea, and will rejoyce. As for you, Gentlemen, I here acquit you before the World, from being any ways privy, or consenting to my Design; for you knew me no more than the rest of the World: and I would not for all I am worth, and a Thousand times more, you or your Good Design should fare the worse on my Account. Leave me to God and my self, for to my own Master I stand or fall. I thank God, I am above both the Hopes and Fears of Man; and neither need nor desire any one's Countenance or Protection: For God is my shield, and exceeding great reward: and tho' tis not unlike, that bonds and afflictions may abide

abide me, yet I trust I can say with St. Paul, Acts 20. 24. None of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto my self, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have receiv'd of the Lord Jesus; to testify the gospel of the grace of God. I thank you for your long Patience; and now I'll dismiss you with that Blessing, which I think truly belongs to you; Heb. 13. 20. Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, thro' the blood of the everlasting covenant; make you perfect in every good work, to do his will; working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ. To whom, with the Father and the Eternal Spirit, One God, and our God, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.



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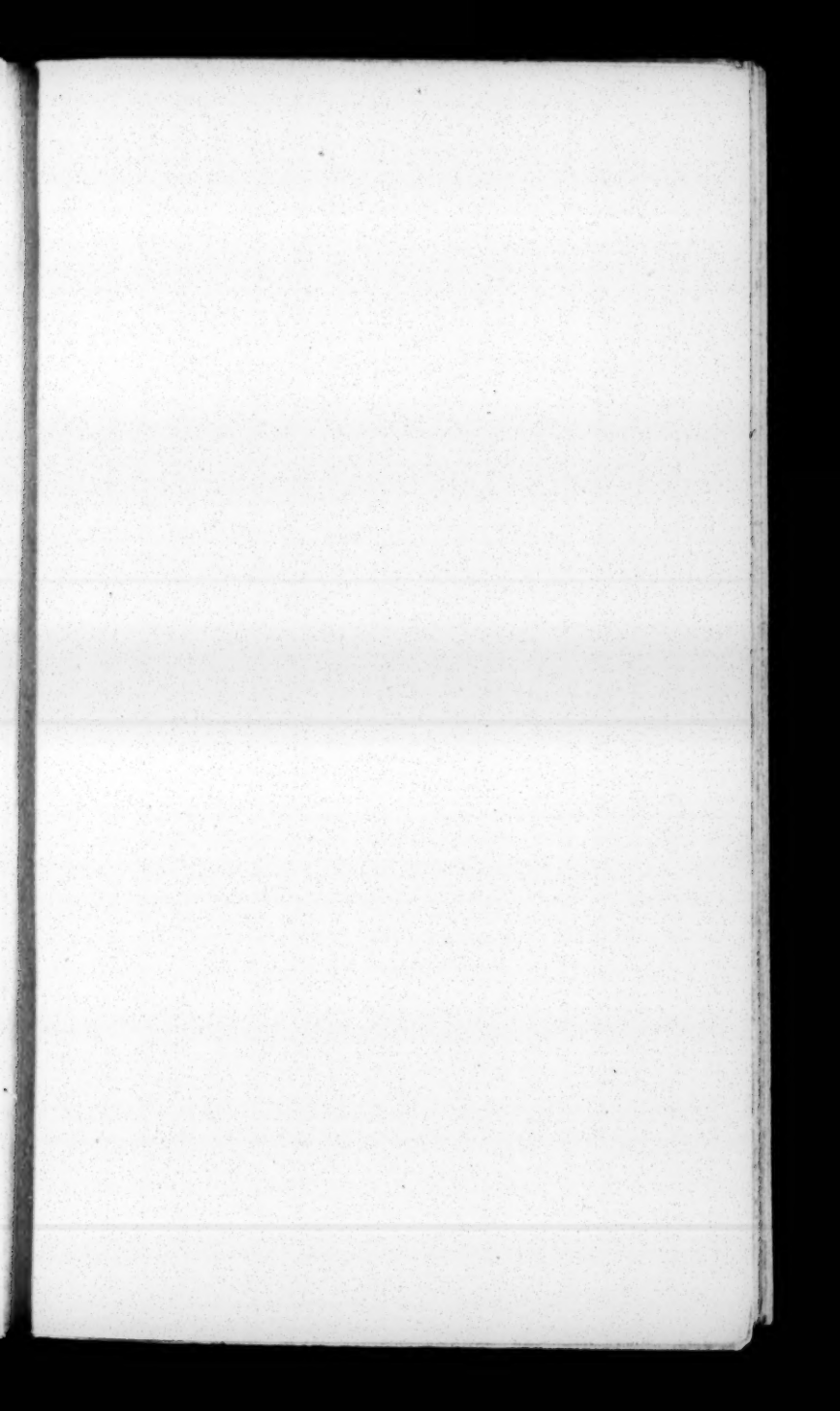


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